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ABSTRACT

The advancement of women in higher education and the selection process of college presidents are addressed. The leadership role is increasingly a "political" one and authority has decreased in the last decade. There is much variation and complexity in institutions that affect the selection process. The two-year colleges are different in governance traditions and in the role of faculty and president. Collective bargaining alters, or should alter, the dynamics of presidential selection, and private colleges seek different qualities than public colleges. In most cases, the selection of a president is a political process. In order to have potential success of the president, there must be some constituent representation in the search process. The appointing authority needs to tailor the description of the position to the specific institution for the next five years. There is a need to get more women to become known as aspirants to careers in college and university administration and to provide more opportunities for the necessary socialization that will result in their being recommended by persons whose judgment is respected and trusted. No matter what the official search and screening process, or the legal requirements, sponsorship is important in developing candidates for advancement and obtaining the recommendation of someone whose judgment is trusted. A few efforts that have encouraged and identified women for advancement are cited. (SW)

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Remarks by Joseph F. Kauffman

for AAHE Panel, Chicago, Illinois, March 21, 1978

on "Strategies for Identifying and Advancing

I am not sure I have any "answers" but I am glad to be a part of this program. As a former Board member of ACE I urged the creation of the Office of Women in Higher Education and I served on the first Commission created to guide that Office in its program development. (I find it difficult to say "no" to anything Emily Taylor or Donna Shavlik ask of me.)

Also, I cannot tell you how I "operate" at my institution or system now, since I no longer administer an institution but, instead, profess to educate and train future college and university administrators. It might interest you to know, however, that at least one-half of my graduate students are women and that I counsel them on the basis of my own view that there will be increasing opportunities for women in higher education administration. (To date, none have found difficulty in putting their training to work.)

I was asked to direct my brief remarks to the selection process for presidents. This requires me to comment, however briefly, on the changing nature of the presidency. In my view, the leadership role is increasingly a "political" one, involving the kinds of skills of leadership that resemble those of a good mayor. Authority, as such, has eroded greatly in the past decade. Certainly it is shared so widely with internal and external constituencies or agencies that unilateral use of authority has become rare indeed. (And not without its dire consequences.) Building and maintaining a coalition of forces becomes essential in order to maintain the support of those you serve. Without such support, you cannot remain in office.

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We don't have time here to discuss the changing scene in higher education. Yet I find it more and more difficult to generalize about the college presidency. The two-year colleges are different in governance traditions and in the role of faculty and president. (In this state, Community College Trustees run for election and may campaign on a platform of getting a new president!) Collective bargaining obviously alters, or should alter, the dynamics of presidential selection. Some private colleges, on the brink of financial disaster, seek very different qualifications in candidates than their more stable and prestigious sister institutions.

Today, more than one-half of all students are enrolled in multi-campus systems of institutions, with single governing boards and central administrations. (164 multicampus Boards govern 865 institutions.) Selection of their campus chief executive officers is often a tug-of-war between campus interests and central administration or system interests. Campus heads, in systems, are often caught in the middle--living with governance arrangements that are often rigid and legalistic; responding to the leadership and advocacy expectations of their campus faculty, students and alumni; and often being treated as middle-management or field representatives by a system board or system administration. (Gary may want to comment on this concern of mine.)

Given this variation and this complexity, it is difficult to say what "they" should do in selecting presidents. I need to know who "they" are. (Incidentally, only 15 percent of all college and university trustees are women! Trustees appoint presidents.)

Nevertheless, my point can be made--the selection of a president, in most cases, is a political process. I mean that with no pejorative

connotations. The appointing authority seeks to find a person who can meet the situation, in which the institution finds itself, and be acceptable to those constituencies whose cooperation and support are crucial to success. The extent to which the appointing authority enables constituent representation in the process will vary, but almost all recognize--and certainly a presidential aspirant must recognize--that in order to get a running start towards success, there must be some constituent representation in the search process. (The appointing authority must control the process as well as make the appointment.)

I advocate and counsel Boards to assess their current needs--their situation, if you will, before determining the qualifications and characteristics sought in the next president. That means tailoring the description to the specific institution for the next five years. That means taking into account the "predecessor problem." That means avoiding the use of boilerplate descriptions that make the presidency of the University of Chicago interchangable with Slippery Rock. (They are looking for a new president!)

Obviously, if one's definition of the "situation" results in seeking someone who's a good manager, or who can retrench, or who can be a tough bargainer, or who can aggressively seek new resources--we must assume that there will be prejudices, on the part of some persons, that will be a factor.* Yet I believe that there is a generational aspect to some of this and that we are winning that war, albeit slowly. (This is not the place to discuss our cultural history and all the "baggage" we bring along with us into the 1980's.)

Others can speak of the requirements and pressures to get search committees and Boards to include women among the candidates. For my few

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*I mean the prejudices that result in role images that may presume certain behaviors as appropriate or inappropriate for women.

remaining moments I want to say this -- Assuming good faith efforts on the part of the search process, there are not enough women stepping forward as candidates. Some women, as with men, do not aspire to such positions--for good reasons, I would add. But many women do have such aspirations and may feel that they do not have the right kind of experience or know the right kind of persons to serve as references.

Ultimately, a decision is made (from among those willing to be considered) that this person will best meet our needs as we have defined them. This person will be effective with the legislature, or reduce our deficit, or nourish our values, be a good team player, or whatever. How do we determine that? It's a matter of judgment, based in large part on what people we respect and trust say.

In sum, then, we've got to get more women to become known as aspirants to careers in college and university administration and we must provide more opportunities for the necessary socialization that will result in their being recommended by persons whose judgment is respected and trusted.

I am indebted to one of my women students for uncovering some recent research on "succession socialization."* The research had to do with Chicanos in Los Angeles County, and with the obstacles to becoming school principals. Nevertheless it contains relevant concepts. We socialize our children in our family setting and in schools, etc. Professional socialization occurs in medical school, for physicians; law school, for lawyers; graduate school for professors; etc. etc.

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*Leonard A. Valverde, Succession Socialization: Its Influence on School Administrative Candidates, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Texas, 1974 (ED 093 052 (ERIC).

Organizational socialization is also a reality. Employees learn those values, norms and behavior patterns that seem necessary, from the organization's point of view, for the organization's progress, stability, status, and the like. Tuning into those values and norms often requires the help of a "sponsor"--or one who is pleased to help a "protege."

No matter what the official search and screening process, or the legal requirements, we know that sponsorship is important, in developing candidates for advancement, and in serving the role of a person of proven good judgment recommending a candidate. If we can rely not only on our own judgment, but also, the judgment of persons we trust, that is a natural bit of insurance.

Obviously, the "protege" is not passive in all of this--she or he is usually "self-selected" and demonstrates the necessary attitudes as well as success skills for continued sponsorship.

There may be other ways of solving the problem, but I believe that the activities of ACE's National Identification Project is very hopeful. It encourages women to step forward and join others in expressing their aspirations for professional advancement and leadership positions in higher education. It builds in a mentor-sponsor possibility, between the National Panalists and the participants. It enables persons, whose judgment is respected and trusted, to become acquainted with and recommend women for positions. And it builds good rosters, as does the valuable work of HERS.

It's not enough--of course. It must be replicated at the regional, state, and institutional level. I am pleased to see that, in Wisconsin, there is developing a state plan for identifying and advancing women. The first State Forum will be held in June, at Wingspread, and I shall be a

participant in that. (Leadership for this is in the hands of Marian Swoboda, Director of the Office of Women, University of Wisconsin System.)

I will end these remarks on a different note. Ultimately, if we are successful, there will be more women presidents. I know, personally, a large proportion of those now in office. (There aren't that many to know!) They face all the problems of presidents--male and female. They will have too few resources for their aspirations. They will deal with difficult faculties, boards and legislatures. They will even tangle with HEW and DOL, as male presidents do. They will certainly worry about student enrollments in the years ahead. As one put it, "I have the same problems and must do the same things that a male president would have to do."

Or as I would put it -- It is an increasingly difficult position to be in, but never has it been more important. (If this were a different occasion, I would want to talk about why it is more important than ever!)

Thank you.